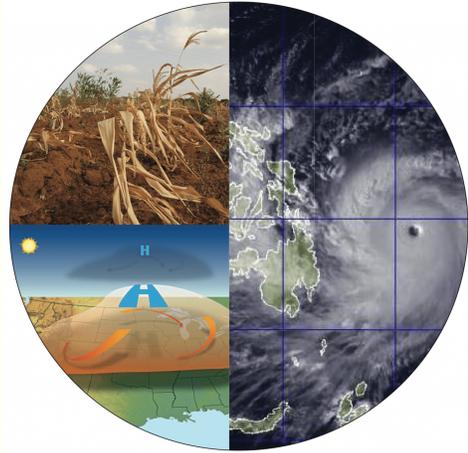


CLIMATE JUSTICE IS



Justice for Women



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AAWCC DAY OF DIALOGUE PLANNING TOOLKIT 2022



In celebration of [Women's History Month](#) (March) and [International Women's Day](#), AAWCC organizes its annual Day of Dialogue to encourage chapters to engage in thoughtful conversation about issues impacting women attending and working at our community colleges. AAWCC develops resources for chapters to plan local events, such as this Toolkit. These resources are available on our website. Chapters are encouraged to develop programming to complement the theme. While called Day of Dialogue, chapter programming takes place throughout the month of March.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY OF DIALOGUE THEME: CLIMATE JUSTICE IS JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Just in the last 12 months, the US has experienced unprecedented weather and fire incidents. This climate change is significantly impacting women within the US and globally. "Gender equality and climate justice are inextricably linked. In any climate crisis, it is women and girls who often face the greatest impacts from environmental degradation and natural disasters - from increased poverty to escalations in gender-based violence. Yet despite creating and leading solutions, they are all too often missing from formal climate leadership, innovation and jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified many of these inequalities... " (continue reading this [Statement by Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for World Environment Day, 5 June 2021](#))

1

EXPLORE THE THEME

Before you plan for your Day of Dialogue (DoD) or series of events, dedicate some time to researching the theme. This section provides:

- Start with the **WHY**: [Understanding Why Climate Change Impacts Women more than Men \(Global Citizen\)](#)
- Dig into the theme: Learning about Desertification
- Theme Resources such as websites and media that can support your planning and events.

Dig into the Theme: "The Ties Between Desertification, Climate Change, and Women" written by Midori Sakura, Tenured Senior 2 Faculty in Earth and Environmental Sciences, Cascadia College

Everyone has heard of climate change, but few have heard of desertification even though it is one of the most serious problems we face environmentally and socially. Desertification does not refer to an area becoming a desert in terms of climate (which is what a "desert" means ecologically). Instead, it is that the land and soils have become so degraded and infertile that they become barren, thus becoming very difficult to sustain plant growth. When people think about environmental problems or systems that support the very essence of our lives, soil is not usually something at the top of the list. Indeed, soil itself is not something that gets much attention. As a bona fide soil scientist, I can't tell you how many times someone with a baffled look would ask me... "why are you studying that?" This is truly the out-of-sight, out-of-mind system.

Let me intrigue you a bit about soils...

Soils are ablaze with life, particularly at the microscopic level. Most of our food and fiber come from plants that are rooted in the ground. Our houses sit on soil, and it stores vast reservoirs of water. Complex biochemical reactions take place there that would make your head spin...and soils hold far more carbon than all the plants on earth (thus important in our fight against climate change). But here's the thing...while soil is ubiquitous, fertile soil is not. Soils take long time periods to develop and the formation of even an inch may take hundreds...or thousands of years (or more) depending on the location...and that's just a basic soil. Fertile soils that can naturally sustain plant growth and allow food/fiber/resources to be harvested in a sustainable manner take even longer to form and are more complex. For the most part, the way soils are used in both developing and developed countries is largely unsustainable. Consider the soil to be a bank that supplies essential nutrients for plant growth. Without sustainable practices that return nutrients back to the soil for future plants, it gets depleted, just like your bank account if you keep withdrawing money but aren't depositing funds back. Additionally, soils also store valuable water supplies for plants and people, particularly important in arid regions.

Desertification is primarily caused by human actions such as overgrazing (animals eating vegetation faster than it grows back), deforestation, harvesting of wood for lumber/fuel, and poor agricultural practices; however, climate change is exacerbating this problem. The common denominator in all these practices is what happens to vegetation - it is removed. Vegetation is a wondrous natural bubble wrap for the soil, protecting it from eroding. Vegetation is also vital to improve soil fertility. Soils become fertile from plants in a variety of ways: the roots are like leaky hoses

enhancing the surrounding soil with valuable organic compounds while growing, and after the plant dies, natural decomposition gives valuable nutrients and organic carbon to the soil. All this organic carbon can be stored in the soil, thus reducing amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which then also increases the water storage capabilities of soils. More nutrients and water in the soil equals more plant growth. More plant growth means soil fertility increases, and more water and carbon are stored in the ground. This is a positive feedback cycle, but when vegetation is removed, a vicious negative cycle may begin; it is like pulling a thread on a sweater...the whole thing begins to unravel quickly.

How does this all relate to climate change and women?

Arid regions are prone to this unraveling since their soils are already fragile with thin layers of fertility (if any), little vegetative cover, and not much water. Climate change compounds the problem making areas drier and hotter. While both developed and developing countries are vulnerable to desertification, developed have bigger “band aids” like fertilizer and irrigation water. Mind you, the problem still exists, but there is money to throw at it for a temporary fix. Conversely, developing countries have far fewer means to buy band aids, and their people get caught in a terrible cycle, particularly the women. Women are often tasked with growing food, gathering fuel, and getting water, yet often have few property rights or power in social or governmental systems. In essence, climate change exacerbates desertification in areas of the world that are already challenged; less fertile soil leads to less fuel and food security, which leads to even further poverty. And of course, fewer plants means the soil continues to undergo desertification which leads to even more poverty and food insecurity. This forces women have to travel farther from safer areas to get resources which leads to even more rape, murder, and unsafe conditions. These environmental problems are innately tied to the social welfare and safety of women. The UN has even recognized the severity of the issue (especially in terms of people migrating in Africa and causing civil strife at a massive scale) and created the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

All this may sound dismal...and it is, so long as people ignore the importance of soil. But the amazing thing is that by taking better care of the soil, the effects of climate change can be mitigated, food and water security increases, health and welfare improves, poverty diminishes, and women become more empowered on the whole.

Resources to Dig Deeper on Desertification

[EXPLAINERS 6 August 2019 12:21 Explainer: ‘Desertification’ and the role of climate change Gender and Desertification: Expanding roles for women to restore dryland areas](#)

[GoodPlanet foundation: Desertification \(Video\)](#)

[United Nations to Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\) Knowledge Hub](#)

[Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security, and Economic Development](#)

General Theme Resources

INTERNATIONAL INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES	MEDIA RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfam Fact Sheet on Climate & Women • UN Factsheet: Women, Gender Equity and Climate Change • Understanding Why Climate Change Impacts Women More Than Men (Joe McCarthy, March 2020, Global Citizen) • Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition (2021) • https://www.fao.org/3/cb4474en/cb4474en.pdf (This site links climate change to food security) 	<p>Movies & Documentaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arise - Women Healing the Environment • Hands On: Women: Climate: Change • Flip the Change: A Documentary about Climate Justice for Women & Girls <p>Books</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed Climate, Women, and Climate Change (Prescott, J. M.) • <i>How Women can Save the World</i> (Karpf, A., 2021)
<p>ORGANIZATIONS</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women Sustainable Development 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Environment & Development Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No One is Too Small to Make a Difference</i> (G. Thurnberg, 2019) • Yale Climate Connections Book List for Women's History Month
WOMEN IN THE WORK (LOOK THEM UP TO LEARN MORE)	Podcasts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPR Living Downstream • Mothers of Invention • Warm Regards • The Beam Podcast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katherine Hayhoe • Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim • Kate Marvel • Greta Thunberg • Miranda Wang 	

2 TAKE ACTION – PLAN YOUR EVENT

1. Consider organizing your Day of Dialogue event with a committee comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students, and community.

It is important to assign notetakers as part of your committee's responsibility so they can collect/record the conversations regarding the three AAWCC questions that will be asked as part of your Day of Dialogue (refer to the discuss toolkit). You may also want to supply notecards and ask people to write down their answers to the questions as well to further collect data.

2. Attend a planning & sharing session hosted by AAWCC national board member, Dr. Kerry Levett, Vice President for Professional Development:

December 3, 2021 (noon EST, 9am PST)

January 14, 2022 (3pm EST, noon PST)

[Join the Zoom](#)

3. Decide on the format for the National Day of Dialogue event. The event can be one hour to a full work day. This depends on what the committee decides they can accomplish. Examples of what a National Day of Dialogue event could consist of are below:

Each campus/chapter will need to plan according to your location's realities. Below are some traditional activities in which local chapters have engaged. This year, you may need to plan for multiple modalities to deliver your program.

- Speakers (keynote speakers or panelists) - on campus and/or via webcasting (Zoom, Facebook, Teams, etc.)
- Large Group Discussions
- Small Group Discussions
- Women of Achievement Awards (honoring women in the community)
- Day of Service
- Opening or closing with a speaker and including discussion sessions throughout the day or however long your National Day of Dialogue is determined to be.

2022 Theme-based suggestions: Climate Justice is Justice for Women!

- Conduct a climate survey on campus (energy use, green spaces, etc.)
- Create campus climate promise grounded in study and action plans
- Locally review policies and practice for climate and sustainability at your college and/or district
- Identify a campus/college project to reduce waste, energy use, or transportation impact; expand green space or recycle rainwater
- Establish completion or continuation scholarships for women in climate science, advocacy and sustainability programs

- Invite a local politician to your campus to discuss local, state, and federal policy and practice on climate change
- Invite a female research/scholar to your campus to share their journey and work

4. Planning Guide for local National Day of Dialogue Committees to consider for the event:

The planning grid below includes the fundamentals a planner must expect to coordinate, paying special attention to your event/activity modality.

Planning Guide Template

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	COMPLETED	NOTES
Site Selection: Physical and/or online			
Event logistics (physical event)			
Hotel accommodations (if you have a speaker)			
Travel arrangements (for speakers)			
Online logistics			
Consult with IT for platform issues			
Consult with instructional designers and faculty for best practice in planning and hosting online events			
Pre-Event Tasks			
Invitations			
Speaker contracts and logistics (i.e. campus access, parking, etc.)			
Food & Drink			
Entertainment			
AV equipment			
Decorations			
Printing (i.e. program, awards, etc.)			
Gifts and awards			
Publicity (social medial, newsletters, photographer, online etiquette)			
Program management (managing the room, introducing speakers, etc.)			
Day of Event Tasks			
Event day set up			
Greeting and orienting speakers and special guests			
Last minute email reminder to chapter members and special guests			
Post-Event Tasks			
Send "thank you" notes			
Send and review event evaluations			
Reporting out to AAWCC (see section 6)			

5. The most memorable aspect of the meeting or event you plan is likely to be the program. If you elect to have a speaker, then selecting the right speaker to address participants is crucial. The following are the basics to keep in mind if you decide to host a speaker:

- Know the program objectives.
- Understand audience needs.
- Ask for references.
- View a demo video. This is especially important for online speakers!
- Don't assume that all celebrities or key community leaders know how to deliver an effective speech in person or virtually.
- Be wary of grandiose claims.
- Provide speakers with good information so they give you what you want.
- Provide the speaker information via email and confirm via phone that they have received the confirmation letter with details about the event.

6. The week before the National Day of Dialogue event:

- Confirm the accommodations and set up.
- Confirm committee assignments with members.
- Confirm time to meet committee members to assist with set up for the day of the event.
- Confirm any speakers via email and phone and be available to answer any last-minute questions.

7. What to do during the National Day of Dialogue event:

- Plan to be at least two hours early on this day to help with set up, questions, and to support others that may need reminding that your event is TODAY!
- Double check on the accommodations and set up for the event. Test your virtual space.
- Bring all items for the event to the venue where the event will be taking place.
- Set up or Log on!

3

SHARE YOUR CHAPTER'S STORY

We want to share the good work happening on our campuses.

- During your Day of Dialogue, take some pics to share on Facebook or at #AAWCC and #dayofdialogue.
- Email pictures of your event that may be used on the AAWCC website to showcase Dialogues happening across the USA to Beth Homan at ehoman@howardcc.edu.
- Report out your Day of Dialogue event so that we can share our work at the fall national conference: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DayofDialogueAAWCCnatl> or use our QR Code



- Submit your chapter for the AAWCC Chapter of the Year award, and/or your program for the AAWCC Program of the Year award (information will be sent separately on these programs)



American Association for
Women in Community Colleges